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OBSERVATIONS

(7)

A FEW SHORT  
OBSERVATIONS

UPON A  
PAMPHLET;

INTITULED,

*A VIEW of the CONDUCT of the PARTIES*  
*respecting the*  
*Proposal of Accommodation offered by the*  
*MERCHANTS of LYNN*  
*to the*  
*PROMOTERS of the EAU-BRINK CUT.*

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BY  
A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.

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1794.

A NEW SHORT  
OBSERVATIONS

OF

PAMPHLET

A NEW OF CONDUCT



PROMOTERS OF THE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

1844

FEB. 4, 1794.

**W**ITHIN these few days, a Pamphlet (the greatest part of which long since appeared in the Cambridge paper, and received through the same medium a complete answer) intituled, *A View of the Conduct of the Parties respecting the Proposal of Accommodation, offered by the Merchants of Lynn to the Promoters of the Eau-Brink Bill, &c.* has been distributed to several members of the House of Commons; intended, no doubt, partly to display to the best advantage, the candour, plain dealing, and attention to the *country interest*, of the Lynn gentlemen and their friends on this occasion, and partly to introduce what is called an opinion of Sir Thomas Page, which is supposed to be unfavourable to the present

scheme for relieving the distressed country, which is the object of it.

Not to dwell upon what is obvious to every one, who has taken the least trouble to be informed of what has been said, written, and done upon the matter; namely, that the opposers of the present plan themselves \*, have uniformly admitted that *something*

\* At a meeting of Commissioners of Sewers for the county of Norfolk, and of Land Owners of the country of Marshland, holden at Lynn, in January 1791 :

“ JOHN EDWARDS Esq. in the chair,

“ It was resolved, That the outfall of the River Ouse  
“ between St. Peter’s Church and the town of Lynn is  
“ defective.

“ That a Cut from the bend of the river near St.  
“ Peter’s Church to Lynn, which Cut was formerly  
“ proposed by Mr. Kinderley, would effectuate a proper  
“ outfall, and at the same time improve the navigation.

“ That *John Edwards*, Esq. *Sir Martin Brown Folkes*,  
“ *Bart. Henry Bell*, *Anthony Dickens*, *George Hogg*,  
“ *Edmund Saffery*, *Thomas Berners Plestow*, *Maxey*,  
“ *Allen*, *William Bagge*, and *John Cary*, Esquires, or  
“ any two of them, be a committee of this meeting,  
“ to request the Mayor of Lynn to call a meeting of  
“ the merchants and traders at Lynn, to take their sen-  
“ timents



thing is absolutely necessary to be undertaken to save the country, the navigation, and the harbour, from the increasing and extreme inconvenience, and even danger, to which they are now exposed, (some of them indeed heretofore have even called for the execution of the very measure in question) but have not condescended to offer any precise, solid, or even plausible plan for that purpose; it seems at present only necessary to offer a few short Observations upon this Appeal that has been made.

Omitting therefore to examine the propriety and delicacy of publishing, without leave, a gentleman's letters, avowedly not written in any public character, containing merely individual sentiments and opinions, and certainly not composed with any idea

“ timents upon the expediency of such a Cut; and that  
 “ they, or any two of them, be also a committee of this  
 “ meeting, to propose the said Cut as a plan of drainage  
 “ to the corporation of Bedford Level, and request them  
 “ to depute a committee to attend a meeting to be  
 “ holden to take such plan into consideration.”

of their being likely to meet the public eye, in company with the ingenious and well-weighed epistles of Mr. Forster, the solicitor and agent for the Lynn opposition; it must be left to fair and impartial men to judge, whether the plan of accommodation contrived by the latter gentleman, or that which Lord Hardwicke's wishes, as an individual, led him to propose, and would have led him strongly to recommend to the committee, had he seen any *real* inclination to peace in the other party, was the most *candid*, the most *conciliatory*, and the most *feasible*\*. In other words, whether Mr. Forster's *congress of delegates* from the districts (*how* to be elected, or by whom, does no where appear) together with his supplementary reference to the *King's prime minister*, whose leisure, local information, and usual practice, no doubt render him very proper for a mediator on this subject—or the *direct, immediate, and simple appointment of two or more able Engineers*, by the concurrence of the two existing committees already acting, and substantially empowered

\* Vide the Pamphlet.

to act, for the general interests concerned; and a binding agreement to acquiesce in their decision (as mentioned in pages 14, 15, and 37 of the Pamphlet) testified the most sincere and unaffected desire to do justice to, and conciliate all parties, and at the same time avoid all unnecessary *delay* in a business so pressing and important. It may here, perhaps, be reasonably enough observed, that there seems to be more of *form* than *substance* in Mr. Forster's system of delegates; as any indifferent person would naturally be curious to know (supposing these *primary assemblies* of the districts to have been indeed practically convened) what *changes*, if any, were fit and likely to have been made of the persons who were already, in point of fact, acting as members of the respective existing committees; which, as it should seem, considering the composition of them on the whole, were as sufficient virtual representations of the different interests for all really useful purposes, as any Convention of Delegates could have been, though not under a



name so splendid and imposing. Surely in each of them were already as respectable, well-informed, disinterested, and proper men for the purpose (at least of choosing, instructing, and superintending engineers, for that is all Mr. Forster's plan, if it means any thing, concludes upon) as could by any means have been found.

Such being the nature of the two propositions, which could no more be reconciled with each other than *delay* with *expedition*, and *confusion* with *simplicity*, Mr. Forster ought not to wonder that his own was not adopted by the committee, to whom the conduct of the bill had been entrusted by the country. Lord Hardwicke did all that it was necessary for him to do; he transmitted, in due time, to the committee, his opinions, and the plan he, from his individual ideas, was induced to propose for their consideration. He explained to them what he thought might be properly assented to by them on the part of the country, (and considering the length of time, trouble, and expence



pence which the formation of the specific plan in agitation had occasioned, it must be confessed to have been no small concession, (had it been adopted) for the sake of obtaining, *if possible*, the consent of the merchants of Lynn to *some plan* which might at last rescue the lands from those waters, to which they had so long been delivered, by obstructions at *the outfall of the Ouse*. Had he been present at the meeting at Cambridge, (which a very pressing duty at the time prevented him, as well as Mr. Yorke, from attending) he could have done no more; had the gentlemen of Lynn even acquiesced in his proposal, he could only have recommended it as an individual, and the body of the committee must have decided; but they never did shew any signs of acquiescing in it; and as to their *system of delegates*, he could only have recommended to the committee to do, as they actually did, *i. e.* to reject it as procrastinatory and impracticable. They could not have done otherwise in justice to their constituents; and Mr. Forster, who has alluded so often to  
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the name of Mr. Yorke, may, perhaps, recollect, that in the early conversations that passed with him upon the subject, Mr. Yorke constantly told him, that he thought the plan of delegates would never do, that it was unnecessary and impracticable, and that the country would never be brought to consent to it. But, says Mr. Forster, why did not the committee agree to assemble the country for the third or fourth time, and take their sense upon this favourite proposition? Because the committee, it is presumed, having already received their powers from a most numerous and respectable meeting of the country held at March on the 14th of May, 1792, and the opinion of a very large majority of the land owners, merchants, conservators of the Cam, &c. being already known; through the medium of various other meetings, to be in general friendly to the bill; and perhaps seeing reason to apprehend (more clearly than Lord Hardwicke or Mr. Yorke could be supposed to do) that the proposal itself tended only to delay and perplex, and could produce no substantial

stantial benefit, thought that it was not fit to trouble the country again by assembling them, without the most evident necessity, and the clearest prospect of doing some good.

This first object of the Pamphlet, therefore, may be fairly dismissed by concluding, "That the Lynn merchants have declined to enter into treaty with the country, on the basis of a concurring appointment by the two existing committees of able engineers, to whom it should have been referred to consider, whether it is practicable to combine a plan of effectual drainage with the safety and improvement of Lynn harbour, and the navigation of the Cambridge and other rivers; and what is the best mode of carrying such a plan into effect?" which appears to have been a very fair and reasonable proposition for the interests of all parties, and which contains the fair and equitable *substance* of Mr. Forster's proposal, when a little disentangled from that copiousness of words, and magnificence of expression,

in



in which it is at once elegantly and studiously involved.

2. The other part of the Pamphlet is to serve as a vehicle for Sir Thomas Page's *letter*, for it cannot absolutely be called an *opinion*; it appearing, that the respectable writer had very strong objections to giving any thing that could in strictness be called an *opinion*, as one may collect from the letter itself. Nor is it to be wondered at; as the same authentic document informs us, that the gentleman alluded to, has not seen the country in question, or reflected upon the subject, for near twenty years; and undoubtedly the grievances complained of have become more crying, and the necessity of applying some remedy more urgent, within that time. It seems that in 1775 Sir T. Page acquired, and gave an opinion on the subject; the substance of which he states to have been, that it was proper to make the Eau-Brink Cut *wide and deep enough*, before the sea was let into it, Nothing could have been more prudent than this idea; and in this view the committee

mittee for conducting the present bill, will undoubtedly be ready to make the Cut as wide and as deep as can reasonably be wished. It is true, the letter does indeed end by declaring the inclination of the writer's opinion to be against the Eau-Brink Cut. General intimations of opinion, are most naturally answered by intimations from equal authority; and therefore without alluding to the direct contrary able professional opinions of Kinderley, Mylne and Golborne, one may venture to oppose the authority of Sir Joseph Banks \* upon this subject, to that of Sir Thomas Page. But the latter gentleman inclines against the Eau-brink Cut, "for fear that its effects should be injurious to *Navigation*, to the *free lands*, and the corporation lands of the Bedford Level." Now it is remarkable, that a great majority of all concerned in the navigations (except the merchants of Lynn themselves,) most of the proprietors of the free lands, and particularly the Bedford Level corporation itself, by repeated solemn acts of the body, have un-

\* V, Annals of Agriculture.

equivocally

equivocally declared their hearty approbation of, and intention of supporting the bill as at present arranged.

But what appears to be *the substantial* part of the letter alluded to, is the decisive objection the writer has, after twenty years dismissal of the subject from his mind, to deliver any fixed opinion upon a matter which, as he says, is involved in controversy between nearly an equal number of men of science. He adds, " that from their being  
 " also of long experience and high cha-  
 " racter in their profession, there scarcely  
 " is a possibility left for the country gen-  
 " tlemen and merchants to decide upon  
 " the question." A tolerably strong opinion of the writer, by the way, that the plan of delegates, if feasible, was likely to have been inefficient. But it appears that with *him* the question remains in uncertainty. But is it *ever* to do so with the country? Is the country ever to remain drowned, and the rivers choaked up, because when men of great science and local experience (Mr. Kinderley for in-  
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stance) are of opinion to relieve us, other men of science (not to compare them with Mr. Kinderley) are to be found by the merchants of Lynn, who are of opinion to keep our lands under water to the end of time? It is high time that some decisive steps were taken, and the best that circumstances admit, is as speedily as possible to take the opinion of Parliament upon this truly important subject, important not only to the 300,000 acres intended to be drained, but to the agriculture and supply of the kingdom at large. The hearty wish, the sincere desire of the promoters of the present plan is, only that the matter may be fairly, fully, and deliberately discussed in Parliament upon its merits; if alterations are necessary let them be made; let justice be done to all; but for God's sake let us at least have *some* plan which may save a most important tract of country, and a most useful river from certain, and perhaps not very distant, ruin and destruction.

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